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Chairman, House Subcommittee on Energy and Power
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* As Prepared for Delivery *

Chairman Whitfield: The American People are primarily interested in stimulating their economy today and creating jobs. One of the concerns that many of us have is that the long list of regulations being considered at the Environmental Protection Agency today will have a significant impact on job creation.

The energy debate in America today has been summed up in about six words, and this is where we are: fossil fuels bad, green energy good. Many of us recognize that it's a lot more complicated than that. However, in order to meet our increased demands just on the electricity side, we are going to need electricity produced from all sources.

The Obama administration has placed so much emphasis on green energy. Billions of dollars in stimulus money and tax incentives has gone for green energy. And the problem I have is that I think the American people are being misled about the role green energy can play in the immediate future as we use taxpayer money to help develop green energy.

For example, the Obama administration recently came out with a ruling that they want to reduce the 2005 greenhouse gas emissions by 83 percent by the year 2035. Now many think that this formula is complicated and wonder what it really means. Why not just say, 'we are going to allow a specific amount of emissions by a specific date?' I think it is being done because the Obama administration does not want the American people to recognize what they are saying. If you look at the numbers of reducing the 2005 emissions by 83 percent, that would be taking American back to the 1920's. That was the last time the United States had emissions that low.

By comparison, in the 1920's, only two percent of rural homes in America had electricity. Around 50 percent of American homes in the rest of the country had electricity. This was before cell phones, flat screen televisions, Blackberries, iPods or iPads. To think that we are going to reduce by 2035 83 percent of 2005 emissions in my view is unrealistic.

Now, having said that, I know this administration is making the argument that green energy is going to carry our country and that is the field in which jobs will be created. But in my view, and in the analysis that I have read and the hearings that have been held on this issue, I do not think that anyone realistically believes that green energy alone can provide the electricity needs of America anytime soon. 52 percent of our electricity still comes from coal and 70 percent of electricity produced in China comes

from coal. American railroads are taking more coal to the ports today for export to China than in any time in history. In 2006, 6.7 billion tons of coal was used worldwide and in 2010, it was over 10 billion tons. And it is anticipated that the amount of coal needed to meet the needs of China and India in the next few years will increase even more.

Yes, we need green energy. We need natural gas, nuclear energy. But we also need coal to meet the projected increase in demand.

Let's be realistic and not mislead the American people but rather have an honest give and take discussion and try to come up with the right policy for the American people. And that is what this and other hearings are designed to do.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses and thank you for being here today.

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